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DOL FOR BLS AND ILAB
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SUBJECT: EU UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN TO 7.4 PERCENT; EURO ZONE RATE DOWN
TO 7.3 PERCENT

[¶1.](#) SUMMARY. The aggregate unemployment rate for the EU-27 reached 7.4 percent in February 2007, according to data published by the EU Commission's Statistical Office (EUROSTAT) on March 30. The unemployment rate for the euro zone (the thirteen EU countries participating in the euro) was down to 7.3 percent. END SUMMARY.

[¶2.](#) With seasonal adjustment and compensation for differences in national statistical methods, the EU-27 unemployment rate stood at 7.4 percent in February 2007, down from 7.5 percent in January 2007 and from 8.2 percent in February 2006. The unemployment rate for the euro zone stood at 7.3 percent in February 2007, down from 7.4 percent in January 2007 and from 8.2 percent in February 2006. The month-to-month decreases were chiefly due to the persisting improvement of the German labor market situation, partially offset by changes in the French figures (see para 7 below).

[¶3.](#) The lowest rates compiled from the EU-27 for February 2007 were recorded in Denmark (3.4 percent) and the Netherlands (3.5 percent). The highest rates were recorded in Poland (11.8 percent) and Slovakia (11.0 percent), though the rate in both countries was a full percentage point down in comparison with the December 2006 rates.

[¶4.](#) EUROSTAT noted that twenty-one countries among the EU-27 recorded a decrease in their unemployment rate over a year, four an increase and two recorded no change. The most significant decreases (February-to-February comparison) occurred in Slovenia (from 6.5 percent to 4.7 percent), Slovakia (from 14.4 percent to 11.0 percent) and Poland (from 15.1 percent to 11.8 percent). The highest relative increase was recorded in Hungary (from 7.4 percent to 7.9 percent).

[¶5.](#) Based on EUROSTAT estimates, male unemployment reached 6.5 percent in February 2007 for the EU-27 and 6.2 percent for the euro zone, down by 0.9 percentage point and 0.8 percentage point respectively when compared to February 2007. The female rate over the same period decreased to 8.4 percent for the EU-27 and to 8.9 percent for the euro zone (minus 0.9 percentage point in both areas).

[¶6.](#) Unemployment rates among young people under 25 (February 2007 estimates, unless otherwise noted) ranged from 6.7 percent in Denmark and the Netherlands to 25.5 percent in Poland, 25.5 percent in Greece (fourth quarter of 2006), and 23.6 percent in Romania. The rate for this age group in February 2007 was estimated at 16.9 percent for the EU-27 and 16.4 percent for the euro zone, compared to 18.1 percent (minus 1.2 percentage point) and 17.4 percent (minus 1.0 percentage point) respectively in February 2006.

[¶7.](#) EUROSTAT estimated that 17.2 million were unemployed in the

EU-27 in February 2007 (11.0 million in the euro zone). Following is the breakdown of unemployment rates in ascending order for the individual EU member states (February 2007 unemployment rates)

Denmark	3.4		
Netherlands	4.4		
Cyprus	4.5	4.7	
Estonia	4.9	5.4	(December 2006)
Latvia		4	
Italy	6.5	6.7	(fourth quarter)
Sweden	6.7	7.0	(preliminary)
Germany	7.1	7.3	(annual average)
Portugal	7.5	7.9	
Bulgaria	8.0		
Slovakia		11.0	
Poland		11.8	

Euro zone 7.3

EU-27 7.4

Note: Estimates for France, up 0.4 percentage point from the previous month, are based on results of the Labor Force Survey that are provisional and may be subject to revision later this year, Commission sources said. A Commission spokesperson stressed that the adjustment was due to "technical" reasons (read: EUROSTAT stays clear from the French controversies about the calculation of jobless figures in the context of the current election campaign). End note.

18. The monthly rates and numbers of unemployed are estimated and based on data from the EU labor force survey. The estimated rates may differ from national unemployment rates due to differences in methods and definitions of unemployment. Unemployed people according to ILO criteria are those aged 15 and over who:

- Are without work;
- Are available to start work within the next two weeks; and
- Have actively sought employment at some time during the previous four weeks.

GRAY